

WASHINGTON.

"Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable."

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1853.

CONGRESS.

The Senate yesterday resumed the consideration of the Army Appropriation Bill, and made such progress therein as to get through with its details in Committee of the Whole. It is, however, still open to debate and amendment.

Amongst the amendments already inserted in this bill is that which was offered by Mr. C. H. HASE on Thursday, appropriating \$150,000 for the survey of the several routes proposed for a railroad to the Pacific. The amendment of Mr. WALKER, alluded to yesterday, proposing to give to settlers the alternate sections of land on the line of this road, was rejected by a large majority. An amendment was agreed to which authorizes the President to contract with individuals, to be remunerated in land, for keeping in repair an overland road to the Pacific, and establishing army posts at different points along said road, for the protection of traders and emigrants. Two other amendments, the one of special notice is the appropriation of \$1,000,000 for a military asylum at the West, and of \$100,000 as a reward to the discoverers of sulphur, either as an anesthetic agent, to be paid whenever it shall be judicially determined which of the competitors for that honor is entitled to it.

A bill having in view a very desirable object was introduced by Mr. BRADBURY, viz: To establish a Court for the investigation of claims against the United States. It was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

The Naval Appropriation Bill was almost exclusively the subject of discussion in the House of Representatives. The principal points at issue had reference to increasing the efficiency of the Navy by augmenting the number of seamen, and authorizing the building of half a dozen ships, with screw propellers, instead of repairing some of the old ones. The amendment proposing an increase of seamen was rejected, and that for building new vessels was ruled out of order. The bill is still pending.

Before the adjournment Mr. LETCHER endeavored to lay before the House a communication from the Secretary of the Interior, in explanation of imputations that had been made upon that officer in the course of the debate on Thursday, but objections having been interposed to the reception or reading of the communication we are left in ignorance of its contents.

We understand that the mail service on the New Orleans and Vera Cruz line will be put in operation with the least possible delay. This contract, which is for tri-monthly trips, is let to E. H. CARMICK, of New York, at \$68,750 per annum. The contract for the extension of two of the trips from Vera Cruz via Acapulco to San Francisco is with A. K. RAMSEY and E. H. CARMICK, and the price to be paid for this extension, provided the contract is ratified by Congress, is \$424,000 per annum.

THE FEE BILL.

It is suggested to us by a professional friend that the Fee Bill which has just passed the two Houses of Congress deserves more than the mere formal notice taken of it in the daily proceedings; and he has furnished the following notes in regard to it:

For the first time since the organization of the Government, this bill introduces a uniform rule of computing the fees, &c. of district attorneys, marshals, clerks, jurors, witnesses, &c.; and it also provides for divers important reforms in the judicial proceedings of the United States courts. Under the old system many abuses have sprung up; and of late years, in some instances, they had become enormous, to the great detriment of the National Treasury and proper judicial procedure, and had induced several efforts, from time to time, by the Judiciary Committee of Congress for their reform. But, amidst the great conflict of interests and the inherent difficulties of the whole matter, these efforts had hitherto been unavailing.

At the opening of this Congress the Judiciary Committee of the House took the subject resolutely in hand; and with the aid rendered them by the Hon. ELMER WHITTELY, whose long experience in public business, and especially as the 1st Comptroller of the Treasury, made him familiar with the details of the subject, with the occasional advice of the Judges of the Supreme Court, the perseverance of the Hon. Mr. McLANE, the chairman of the committee, and the patient labors of the entire committee, a bill was, towards the close of the last session, finally matured to the satisfaction of most of the committee.

No opportunity for regular reports from the committee being given, by a suspension of the rules it was got before the House, with an able report from the chairman; and after undergoing a strong opposition, not only in but out of the House, it was at length worked through and sent to the Senate. The proper committee of that body scrutinized the numerous provisions of the bill with much care; it was thoroughly discussed in the Senate, which made some dozen unimportant amendments, passed and sent it back to the House, which, on the advice of their committee, agreed to the amendments in gross.

Regarding the fact that the standing committees of the House have had hardly any opportunity to make reports during this whole Congress, the immense difficulty with which nearly all valuable legislation, beyond the usual appropriation bills, has had to encounter, and the acknowledged complication of the subject, the passage of this important act is a bright page in the annals of this Congress and a matter of gratulation for the whole country.

NOMINATIONS IN CONNECTICUT.—The Whigs of Connecticut held their State Convention at Hartford on Thursday, and made the following nominations for State officers, to be voted for at the ensuing Spring elections:

Hon. HENRY DUTTON, for Governor; THOMAS FITCH, Lieutenant Governor; THOMAS ROBINSON, Secretary of State; D. W. CAMP, Treasurer; ALLEN P. STILLMAN, Comptroller.

The Democratic Convention was held at Middletown on Wednesday, when Governor THOMAS H. SEYMOUR and the other State officers were nominated for re-election.

WHIG NOMINATIONS IN OHIO.—The Whig Convention of Ohio assembled at Columbus, in that State, on the 22d instant, and made the following nominations for State officers:

NELSON BARRETT, for Governor; J. J. ALLEN, for Lieutenant Governor; HENRY BRACHMAN, for State Treasurer; N. H. VAN VORHES, Secretary of State; W. H. GIBSON, Attorney General; F. T. BACHUS, Judge of Supreme Court.

The Rev. WILLIAM PINKNEY, of Hadenburg, Maryland, received the honorary degree of D.D. from St. John's College, Annapolis, Maryland, at the commencement in that institution on the 22d instant.

The Rochester Daily Advertiser says that Mr. Decker, less than a year ago purchased a pair of Cochon China Fowls, from the proceeds of which, since that time, he has realized \$438. The chickens sold for \$10 per pair, and the eggs for \$4 per dozen.

PRESIDENT FILLMORE'S VISIT SOUTH.

It has been stated in the papers that President FILLMORE intends to proceed on a visit through the Southern States, and thence by the Mississippi and the Lakes to Buffalo. We believe it is the wish of the President to make this tour, but it is not certain that he will be able to do so. We hope that he may, both for his own gratification and that of his admiring and grateful fellow-citizens throughout the South. The following excellent remarks on the subject we copy from the New Orleans Bulletin:

"Some time since it was stated that Mr. FILLMORE, after the expiration of his term of office, would make a tour of the Southern States of the Confederacy, he never having been in the South or Southwest, and never having had an opportunity of witnessing the wonders of the Valley of the Mississippi. This statement received general credence, and was hailed with unbounded satisfaction by a very large and respectable portion of our citizens. Outside of a certain circle, the retiring President, in fact, was regarded with a warm and respectful interest which will be remarkable in his university."

"Late accounts from Washington indicate that Mr. FILLMORE will be accompanied by several of the members of his Cabinet, all of whom, we doubt not, will be welcomed with true Southern hospitality; which means sincerely instead of formality, heartiness instead of hollowiness. The display portion of the reception may not be quite so grand or so magnificent as a scale as is usually the case in more populous and wealthy States and countries, but we venture the assertion, without any fear of truthful contradiction, that there will be more heart feeling, genuine respect, and kindly regard in the attentions which may be paid him who will have no power to reward friends or to punish enemies, than any that have been paid to a public man since death has set his seal upon the ages and patriots of '76 and '82, to say nothing of those grand old statesmen over whose loss the nation has been called upon to mourn three times within less than that number of years."

"The character of Mr. FILLMORE, public and private, is of pure and beautiful character, and is undivided praise of friends, and exerts even tributes of admiration from opponents. As a Chief Magistrate, he has been true, just, and exact, fully up to the line of duty prescribed by the Constitution he had taken a solemn oath to support. He has never swerved from the true path, no matter how great the temptations on the one hand or how imminent the risks and trials to be encountered on the other. And when the storm of fanaticism beat upon his head, and the waves of a sectionalism rolled at his feet, he stood calm, unmoved, his steady purpose never failing him, while each hour added strength and fervency to his devotion to his country, his whole country, and nothing but his country. He forgot the section of his birth; he refused to know the divisions of latitude and longitude; he would know no country but the Union, one and indivisible. With the assistance of such men as Clay, Webster, and Cass, the fearful contest was brought to a happy and auspicious termination, and he and they earned a clear title to the lasting gratitude of their countrymen. With the just and patriotic claim which will never be disputed."

"Had he betrayed his trust in that terrible crisis—had he even wavered, what would have been the condition of this country now? It would, in all probability, have been rent in twain, and distractions, border wars, impoverishment, and ruin would have taken the place of present contentment, peace, and prosperity. Eternal honor, then, to the noble and devoted patriot-statesman!"

VISIT TO THE CALORIC SHIP.—An invitation having been extended to the President of the United States, the PRESIDENT ELECT, several members of the Cabinet, and other distinguished officers of the Government, by Captain LOWEN, of the *Ericsson*, to visit that vessel, they yesterday proceeded to the steamer some time before noon. The party—Gen. PIERCE accompanying Mr. FILLMORE—embarked for the *Ericsson* from the Navy Yard in the United States steamer *Venice*.

THE FAIR OF THE METROPOLITAN MECHANICS' INSTITUTE was opened to the public on Thursday at the appointed hour of twelve o'clock meridian. Great satisfaction was felt and expressed by the visitors at the number, excellence, utility, and beauty of the subjects exhibited, as well as of the very handsome and attractive character of the exhibition itself, taken as a whole. We presume that during its continuance the Hall will be one of the most popular places of resort, both for residents and strangers, in our metropolis.

In the evening the proceedings of the Grand Opening were carried out according to programme. The Hon. JOSEPH R. CHANDLER delivered the address—a very able one—occupying about an hour.

Up to the time of closing the Exhibition it was crowded with happy and gratified visitors.

We learn it is acknowledged, by gentlemen from other cities, that in most essential respects this exhibition has yet had no superior in our country.

The PRESIDENT ELECT on Thursday morning paid a visit to the President of the United States, remaining with him a quarter of an hour.

We understand that on Saturday last the Chevalier HULSMANN presented his credentials to the Secretary of State, and was received as the Chargé d'Affaires of his Majesty the Emperor of Austria to the Government of the United States.

ALEXANDRIA AND HARPER'S FERRY RAILROAD. The bill to change the name of this road to the *Alexandria, Loudoun, and Hampshire Railroad*, and to extend the road to Paddy Town to connect with the coal-fields of Hampshire and Maryland, passed the Senate of Virginia on Wednesday. It appropriates three-fifths of one million two hundred thousand, or seven hundred and twenty thousand dollars; this amount to be expended east of the Shenandoah river.

The Hon. GEORGE EVANS has been appointed by the Governor and Council of Maine to be Attorney General of that State.

In the Virginia House of Delegates bills have been reported for running and marking the eastern and western boundary lines between Virginia and Maryland. This line says the Baltimore American) has long been a matter of contention between the two States. Maryland has always claimed that her boundary was along the longest branch of the Potomac, but Virginia would never consent to enter upon the examination of the respective titles of the two States except on condition that the survey should be commenced at the stone planted by Lord Fairfax, which it is contended is not on the branch of the Potomac which Maryland claims as her true boundary.

We are requested to state that several members of Congress from the State of North Carolina did not participate in the proceedings had on the 22d of February last, when the Hon. Mr. VENABLE made an address and presented a piece of marble from that State for the Washington Monument, because they had no knowledge that any such ceremony was to take place, either from any person in North Carolina or in this city.

The Legislature of MARYLAND yesterday rejected a bill which proposed to permit the circulation in that State of the notes of its own Banks of a less denomination than five dollars. If the Legislature adheres to this decision, it will not be lawful, after the 1st of March, to offer as currency in Maryland any bank note of a less amount, than five dollars.

PAMPHLET AND MAGAZINE POSTAGE BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND GREAT BRITAIN.

Considerable interest having been expressed in favor of a reduction of pamphlet and magazine postage between the United States and Great Britain, we have obtained copies of, and publish below, the official correspondence which has recently taken place on this subject. It will be observed that, so far as our Post Office is concerned, there is every disposition to effect the desired reduction. It is proper to remark that under the existing arrangement no accounts between the two countries are kept of printed matter. On such matter each country collects its own postage; and, as the rates in each are the same, it follows that this postage is equally divided between the two countries, no matter whether the conveyance is by British or United States steamers.

My LORD: By the convention of the 15th of December, 1848, the rates agreed on for pamphlet and periodical postage between the United States and the United Kingdom are, for every work not exceeding two ounces in weight, one penny; for every work above two ounces in weight, two pence an ounce or fraction of an ounce, British charge; and it is stipulated that "the rates to be levied by the Post Office of the United States on similar works, addressed to or coming from the United States, shall not exceed the rates to be charged in the United Kingdom."

Until our postage law of 1851 went into effect, (1st of July of that year) the United States charge on such works, to or from the United Kingdom, was only one cent an ounce, or fraction of an ounce; but under that law this rate has been raised to one cent per ounce, such works at this rate the same as charged in the United Kingdom. Thus, on a pamphlet say of the weight of a fraction over three ounces the whole postage amounts to thirty-two cents, and so on.

This high postage tax is a source of much complaint, and especially on the part of literary men and institutions desirous of subscribing directly to British periodicals instead of having to rely on reprints of works of this kind. On my part, I shall be pleased to reduce the rate say one cent an ounce, or fraction of an ounce, where four cents are now charged on printed pamphlets and periodicals, to one cent an ounce, thus bringing the whole combined rate down to two cents an ounce, from one up to sixteen ounces, with this exception, that no charge shall be made on works sent over three thousand miles in the United States.

As there are now under consideration two or three propositions for slight modifications of the existing arrangement, I beg leave to bring this matter also to your notice at the same time, in the confident hope and belief that you will unite with me in the desired improvement.

There can be no doubt that the reduced rate would thus be increased, and the measure would be regarded with much satisfaction by the public.

I have the honor to be, with high respect, your obedient servant,

S. D. HUBBARD, Postmaster General.

The Right Hon. the Earl of HARWICK, &c., London.

GENERAL POST OFFICE, LONDON, JANUARY 28, 1853.

SIR: I have laid before the Postmaster General your letter of the 10th ult., offering to reduce the United States rate of postage on printed pamphlets and periodical works, not of daily publication, transmitted by the post between the United Kingdom and the United States, to one cent an ounce, or fraction of an ounce, provided the British office will consent to a like reduction; such rate of postage, to be levied, to be applied only to pamphlets, &c. up to the weight of sixteen ounces, and to the noble and devoted patriot-statesman!

In considering this proposal, two objections occur to the Postmaster General, which present, in his opinion, serious obstacles to the adoption of the measure.

First, the proposed scale contains such a number of gradations as would be productive of loss of time and of error in affixing the charge; and

Secondly, the amount of postage chargeable on publications of a light weight would be so small as to lead to their fraudulent use as substitutes for letters.

The Postmaster General directs me to state that he cannot but consider that the arrangements respecting books, which were proposed by his predecessor, the Marquis of Clanricarde, in Colonel Maberly's letter of the 10th of October, 1851, offered much greater advantages to both the United States and to this country, than the scheme now under consideration, while they were free from the objections which have just been mentioned.

Those arrangements were—

- 1st. That every packet should be charged a printed book, magazine, review, or pamphlet should be charged according to the following scale: when not exceeding half a pound in weight, 6d.; when exceeding half a pound and not exceeding one pound, 1s.; when exceeding one pound and not exceeding two pounds, 2s.; and so on, increasing one shilling for every additional pound, or fraction of a pound.

2d. That every packet should be sent without a cover, or in a cover open at the ends or sides.

3d. That it should contain a single volume only, the several sheets of parts thereof, where there are more than one, being sewed or bound together.

4th. That it should not exceed two feet in length, breadth, width, or depth.

5th. That it should have no writing or marks upon the cover, or on its contents, except the name and address of the person to whom it may be sent.

6th. That the postage should be prepaid in full, and that, as respects packets posted in the United Kingdom, this prepayment should be effected by affixing under the packet or its cover the proper number of stamps.

7th. That if any of the above conditions be violated, the packet should be charged as a letter.

8th. That, in order to prevent any obstacles to the regular transmission of letters, any officer of the post office should be authorized to delay the transmission of any such packet for a time not exceeding twenty-four hours from the time at which the same would otherwise have been forwarded by him.

9th. That of the total amount of postage paid upon each packet, one-third should be considered to represent the inland British rate, one-third the sea rate, and the remainder the rate of transit to that country which effected the marine conveyance.

As was explained in the subsequent correspondence, Oregon and California might be excluded from the arrangement, and there is little doubt that her Majesty's Government would be fully consent to an increase and reduction of rates being charged upon books conveyed to or from any other place within the United States (if such there be) a greater distance than three thousand miles, provided that the collection of the additional amount were in all cases undertaken by the United States.

Bearing in mind that each packet could be limited to a single volume, it seems to the Postmaster General hardly necessary to impose any restriction as to weight; but, on this point, if you entertain a contrary view, some modification of the regulations (as in the case of India, stated below) might not doubt be agreed upon without difficulty.

In conclusion, the Postmaster General desires me to inform you that a book post at rates precisely similar to those proposed to the United States Post Office has now been set up between the United Kingdom and most of the British colonies, and that the necessary steps for extending the measure to the whole of the British possessions in the East Indies have just been concluded. In this latter case, however, the weight of the packet has, on account of the difficulty of inland conveyance in India, been limited to three pounds avoirdupois.

I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient, humble servant,

J. TILLEY, Assistant Secretary.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 24, 1853.

My LORD: I am in receipt of Mr. Tilley's letter of the 28th ultimo, communicating to me the views of his office on my proposition of the 10th December last, for a modification of the rates of postage on pamphlets and periodicals between this country and the United Kingdom.

On reference to the terms of my proposal, I perceive that it is susceptible of the interpretation which you have given to it; namely, that the rate on either side should be reduced to one cent an ounce, from one up to sixteen ounces; whereas I did not intend to be understood as proposing to change the rate on pamphlets of the weight of two ounces and under, should be permissibly willing to abide by your interpretation of the proposal; but I intended to be understood as offering only to "reduce the rate, say to one cent an ounce or fraction of an ounce, where four cents are now charged," except with reference to works sent over 3,000 miles in the United States.

Therefore, except in regard to the comparatively few works of this kind transmitted to and from Oregon and California, (over 3,000 miles), the number of gradations would not be increased, nor do I think that the instances of fraud which are suggested by the proposed reduction, are any more likely to be increased by the proposed reduction. Any who are disposed to resort to such means of communication have the same facilities under the present as they would have under the proposed arrangement, at least so far as pamphlets of the weight of two ounces and

under are concerned, and through newspapers, which are also transmitted at a low rate of postage.

The existing state of our foreign mail arrangements, I am not disposed to press this matter; but, with the above explanation, I presume my proposition will be satisfactory to you, and if so, I shall be happy to have your concurrence.

In regard to the plan proposed by you for the transmission of books between the two countries, I have to say that the principal objections to it, heretofore presented by this Department, still exist, and they are such as, in my opinion, should be conclusive against its adoption. Some of these objections are:

1. A pamphlet which may now be sent for four cents would, under the proposed substitute scale, be subject to a postage of twelve cents, (6d.).

2d. The proposed division of the inland postage into equal parts between the two countries, would not be just, inasmuch as the

transportation would necessarily be greater, both in point of distance and expense, in the United States of the kind were made, requiring accounts to be kept, at least five-eighths of the inland postage, as in the case of letters, (Oregon and California excluded, as proposed), should belong to the United States.

3d. The rates as proposed by you would be much lower in many, if not in most, cases than what the present tariff law of the kind were made, requiring accounts to be kept, at least five-eighths of the inland postage, as in the case of letters, (Oregon and California excluded, as proposed), should belong to the United States.

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